

Response

A. Introduction

Claims 1-10 were pending in the application prior to entry of the preceding amendments, and *claims 1, 3-4, and 6-10* are pending now. The Examiner has withdrawn claims 8-10 from consideration as directed to a non-elected invention. He also initially rejected (1) claims 1 and 3 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,297,749 to Smith, (2) claims 2 and 4-5 as obvious in view of combined disclosures of the Smith patent and U.S. Patent No. 6,567,220 to McDonald, and (3) claims 6-7 as obvious in view of combined disclosures of the Smith patent and U.S. Patent No. 6,675,800 to Keller.

B. The Claims

Applicant has revised independent claim 1 to include features of previously-pending claims 2 and 5. He has amended independent claim 6 similarly. Both claims now refer to a protective shield with a display device *removably* mounted on the *outside* of the shield. As noted in the application:

. . . this disposition is particularly advantageous when it is desired to have a display device that is releasably mounted on the shield; thus, a user already wearing protective equipment comprising a mask and a shield, e.g. to provide protection against toxic gas, can in the event of smoke occurring or thickening act to don the display device without removing the protective equipment; similarly, a user already wearing protective equipment comprising a mask and a shield fitted with a display device can detach the display device from the shield without removing the protective equipment, on dissipation of the smoke that once required the use of the display device.

See Application at p. 2, ll. 15-29.

According to the Examiner, the McDonald patent (cited against claims 2 and 5) discloses a “display device in the form of a retinal scanner . . . secured

outside the shield.” See Office Action at p. 3. Clear, however, is that retinal scanner 26 of the McDonald patent is *fixed* to the outside of the shield and is *not removable* therefrom. See McDonald, col. 2, ll. 36-37 (display device “secured to the mask”). Indeed, the shield and retinal scanner are both stowed and donned together, see id., col. 4, ll. 10-23, which is not necessarily the case for the present invention. If the retinal scanner of the McDonald patent is unneeded, it may be switched off while remaining in the wearer’s field of view, see id., col. 3, ll. 58-60; by contrast, the display of claims 1 and 6 may be removed completely from the field of view. As noted above, the ability of the present invention to allow removal of the display device from the shield is advantageous in many circumstances, especially after smoke has dissipated somewhat but not completely. For at least this reason, therefore, Applicant requests that claims 1, 3-4, and 6-7 be allowed.

Conclusion

Applicant requests that the Examiner allow claims 1, 3-4, and 6-7 and that a patent containing these claims issue in due course.

Respectfully submitted,



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